



## Rob's Rapport

Time for a quiz. See how well you do...

You see a crime or antisocial behaviour taking place in front of you. Do you:

- A. Call the police?
- B. Film it and post it to social media without calling the police?

Having seen the footage, or read the story of impending Armageddon on social media do you:

- A. Get frustrated that no one called the police?
- B. Blame the police for a lack of clairvoyance and not being there at exactly the right time?
- C. Put on your faux outrage, join the easily angered, and type in capitals "something has to be done about it"?

If you picked A then thank you for still being part of the real world. Merry Christmas.

**Inspector Rob Bryan**

## Burglary Prevention this Christmas

Burglars are opportunistic and observant. They will look for homes with windows or doors left open, or with vulnerable features they can exploit.

Many burglars typically do not want to be seen or heard and if they feel that they would be noticed by a neighbour or passer by, they are more likely to feel vulnerable and choose somewhere else.

### Secure your boundary:

Lower fences at the front of a property - no more than 1m high - are better than high fences as they allow for natural vision over and do not provide cover for someone hiding or trying to force a window or door.

At the rear and sides of a property, taller fencing is recommended to prevent easy access. A minimum height of 1.8m is advised.

Ensure access to the sides and rear of any property is restricted with lockable gates situated at the front of any side access path.

Try to make it difficult for anyone climbing over the fence by adding light trellis, thorny plants or a suitable anti climb topping such as plastic spikes.

Gravel driveways and paths are ideal at preventing a silent approach.

Most criminals will not target your home if the risk to them of being seen, noticed and getting caught is too great. Overgrown bushes and trees make it easier for a burglar to get close to the front of a home unnoticed so keep them pruned back.

### Secure your outbuildings:

Sheds and garages are often vulnerable as they are not very secure and contain tools with which the burglar can use to assist them to gain entry into a home.

Secure sheds with a hasp and staple fitted with a closed shackle padlock.

Shed windows can be reinforced with grills. For added security, fit a shed alarm.

Garage doors can be made more secure by installing additional security such as padlocks to provide multiple locking points or using floor mounted locking T bars.



If you have an internal door leading directly from your garage to your home, ensure this door is solid and robust and secured with a British Standard 5 lever mortise lock and additional security such as hinge bolts.

If items can be seen from outside, they will be vulnerable so cover them up and tidy away tools.

Use a ground anchor to secure motorcycles, pedal cycles and other high value items to stop them being easily removed. Tools can also be chained to floors and walls to prevent their easy removal.

Consider extending the coverage of any household burglar alarm to your garage or conservatory.

Keep bins stored away if possible - they provide a climbing aid for burglars and if left out they can indicate if a home is unoccupied.

Ladders and tools left outside and insecure can often be used to break into or access your home so ensure these are locked to a ground anchor or put away after use.

#### **Secure your home:**

A timber door should be of solid construction and fitted with British Standard 5 lever mortise lock and an automatic deadlocking rim latch.

Additional security products are available to strengthen door frames, such as London bars, Birmingham bars, hinge bolts and rack bolts. Rack bolts - placed at the top and bottom of the door - are more suited to a back door.

A door viewer is a good way to identify unknown visitors, and a door chain can also help.

A letterbox guard fitted to the rear of the door will prevent someone attempting to open the door mechanism from inside or fishing for items close by. Keep keys and valuables away from door openings.

Consider how you would get out of your home in a fire - keep your keys in a place where you can find them quickly but which is out of reach from any letterbox opening.

Modern multi-locking and PVC doors use a system of hooks and latches. These only work if you remember to lift the handle, lock and remove the key.

Sliding patio doors are vulnerable to forced entry. Check yours to ensure it has an anti-lift device fitted to prevent it being lifted off its hinges.

Key operated locks are good for all window types. Sash windows can also be fitted with sash stops to prevent opening the window wide enough to climb through. Modern windows can have restrictors fitted to allow for ventilation but prevent further opening from outside. Laminated glazing or security film can help to reinforce glass if attacked.

If you live in a flat, it is essential that the communal front door is properly locked and secured. Contact your landlord or letting agent if you believe the locking mechanism is defective.

Challenge anyone who tries to tailgate you through a communal door.

#### **Secure your contents:**

Property marking any items of value helps us trace owners of stolen goods. Register these items on an accredited property database.

Take photographs and keep documents such as receipts to prove ownership of your property.

If you have a home safe, it should be in a hidden location and bolted to the floor or wall. Use one that is security rated. Safes vary according to the type and value of item to be stored within, so check with your insurer to ensure you are adequately covered. Alternatively, there are safety deposit box companies who offer secure storage at controlled sites fitted with security rated vaults. Consider using a vault if you have a large amount of valuable items to store.

Avoid keeping valuables on view from outside your home.

